

Survivor of Cuba Invasion Describes Horror of Rout

In two previous accounts from his diary, Manuel Penabaz, a survivor of the abortive Cuban invasion, told of his training in a rebel camp high in the mountains of Guatemala and of the rebel landing at Bahia de Cochinos Bay (Bay of Pigs) on Cuba's South coast. Mr. Penabaz left Miami Jan. 24 with a handful of other rebels for a midnight flight in an unmarked plane to Guatemala. As a member of a heavy gun battalion, he underwent rigorous training in the heavily-armed rebel camp, which was so crowded that many had to sleep outside.

The rebel brigade broke camp April 10 and sailed a few days later from Nicaragua on a rusty Liberty ship which appeared to be on its "last voyage." The invasion force from the six-ship convoy hit the Bay of Pigs beaches April 17. "We are entrenched on Cuban soil," Mr. Penabaz wrote.

At first, the rebels advanced, inflicting heavy enemy casualties and meeting weak resistance. But the next day the tide turned. Resistance of the Castro forces stiffened. Cuban planes bombed and strafed the beachhead. Mr. Penabaz noted all night on a reef to direct rebel supply ships which never came. "Prospects are bleak," he wrote. Previous diary stories appeared Thursday and Friday. Here is his final account of his escape from the beachhead.

By Manuel Penabaz
Written for United Press International

MIAMI, Apr. 18. Bahia de Cochinos, Cuba—"Get up. Enemy planes overhead."

So began one of the most tragic and faithful days of my life. The voice was that of my companion and friend, Dr. Jose Enrique Dausa.

"We might have to shoot our way out of here. Enemy infantry are surrounding us."

The shock of being awakened so brutally left me shaking like a leaf. I remember telling myself I must keep calm and even when I mastered myself, I was still shaking.

"Head for our shelter," it was the voice of Dr. Dausa.

When we arrived at the high school we had taken over for our legal department, Oliva Enid, executive officer of the invasion brigade, drove past in a jeep with his aid, Eric, and said: "Get in. We're going to post advance observers to direct the artillery fire. The enemy is only a few kilometers away."

Dig Trenches in Sand
All around me, there was great activity. Troops of Cuban soldiers were digging trenches in the sand. I saw Jorge Alonso, Fidel (son of a former Cuban vice-president) and Pepito Miro (son of the Cuban Revolutionary Council) digging trenches with poles.

The troops on the beach had small arms and rifles for close-in combat. There was no question now of breaking out of the beachhead. Many had two or three pistols strapped to their sides.

I got into Oliva's jeep and we took off speeding for the front. Two kilometers (1 1/4 miles) away, we came across the advance lines where our troops were already dug in. We called Francisco Montiel chief of the battalion emplacement there. With him was his second man, Felix Urra. Both had been in the last war in Cuba—one fighting with Fidel Castro and the other with Fulgencio Batista. Now they were united in the war against communism in Cuba.

Between Sea and Jungle

Montiel pointed out the spot where he believed we should locate the advance observers. One of our tanks was camouflaged at a place midway between the sea and the jungle. We could scarcely make it out and knew it would be a violent surprise for the advancing enemy.

Once we finished there, we returned to the command post on the beach. About 400 troops from two battalions were strung along about a kilometer of the beach. Montiel's battalion was dug in two or three kilometers to the north near Red Beach. Another battalion and part of the parachute battalion were in combat at San Blas, about twelve kilometers inland. The other battalion, battalion 5, had disappeared somewhere beyond Red Beach. (I have since learned that only three men from that battalion escaped, one of whom, Nando Santana, reached Miami May 1.)

Our situation on the beach was made even more desperate by the fact all the 50-caliber machine-gun ammunition had been exhausted. In headquarters, Jose San Roman, Olivia Ferrer (G-3 of the brigade), Morales (G-1), Andreu and Manuel Artime (highest civilian representative in the invasion, whose capture was disclosed May 3) were trying desperately to get air support. The reply came over the radio, in English: "Don't worry. They will be there soon. Keep fighting."

Then San Roman ordered us to set up a defense perimeter around the radio shack.

"This is our last hope," he said. Artime was silent and gripped firmly his M-3.

It was pitiful to witness the impending death of our youth and men who believed in freedom in an apparently useless cause. I remember Andreu saying, "Boys, let's shoot them now the men of the 2505 Brigade die." He was holding

grenade in his hand as he spoke.

Around Midday, 105-mm. Howitzer shells started raining down on the beach. The first bombs fell in the sea, about 100 meters off-shore—but dangerously close to our ammunition dump on the beach. From that moment on, enemy artillery fire was constant. They were firing from about eight miles away and we were powerless to answer back.

Minutes after the bombardment started, two Castro Sea Furies and two jets and a B-26 flew over, strafing and bombing. The Sea Furies and jets apparently were directing the artillery fire. Our air arm was destroyed and about thirty of our airmen dead. I saw three of our planes downed the day before.

Despite the aerial and artillery bombardment, we suffered few casualties on the beach. I did see two houses hit by bombs.

Three of our tanks rumbled into the beach area, retreating from San Blas. Somehow all of our tanks managed to escape inland despite having faced the superior firepower of Castro's Stalin tanks.

Panic in the Troops

Not far behind the tanks came our armored cars and foot soldiers. I heard that a retreat had been ordered without consultation with headquarters, producing panic and confusion among the troops. Leaving our heavy weapons guns and the tanks, troops abandoned. San Roman took charge of the situation.

The men who straggled onto the beach were disorganized and rebellious and threw their weapons on the ground, shouting "the mountains." To make the situation worse, we saw two enemy frigates offshore and a Catalina seaplane overhead directing their fire.

I went up to San Roman and told him I thought it time for everyone to do what he could to save himself.

"We've got to get to the mountains," I said.

I covered the 200 meters to the beach. Mortar shells were falling and even from the spot. Our tanks still barked back against the enemy. I saw a group of men on the beach trying to get a launch started, but at the same time I saw a rubber raft, and I think the rubber raft would be less likely to sink in heavy seas.

With me was an old friend from my own province, Ren Salvia.

"Let's take the raft," I said. "It's better."

Three other men came up and I told them to get in. All five of us piled in and started paddling out to sea with the three oars in the raft.

Trapped on Beach

Glancing back, we saw the entire battalion fleeing in panic—running wildly toward the sea and then, when the shells rained down on the beach, back toward the road, and then back toward the sea. A pathetic scene of panic only sixty hours after the invasion, born of ideals and hope, began.

A launch with six men instructed us until we were a safe distance from the shore. Fifty-caliber machine-gun bullets splattered in the water around us as we pulled away from the beach.

At dawn the next day, we found ourselves near a reef. Since we had nothing to eat, I proposed we try to strike for the reef to scavenge for clams or seagull eggs.

Battered by the waves, we lost the motor for our raft and

Niagara at Night

Floodlights on the American Falls and lights of the new Prospect Park Observation Tower combine to provide this night view of the cataract. The photo was taken from the Canadian shore.

The little gasoline we had passed us when a head appeared. But we managed to get on the bridge.

"Don't leave us," we shouted. I have never felt such despair. Nor will I ever forget two canteens of water we had and that fact. In Spanish, he shouted: "Wait boys, we're coming."

By Monday, April 24, our water was gone and we were completely exhausted, and had abandoned all hope. At last, at 3 p. m. April 24, we saw over the horizon a white tower. The ship was coming almost directly toward us.

After what seemed an eternity, the red glow of the ship's searchlight came over us and we began to see our homeland remain enslaved. And if we go back again—and as no one on the deck—a will America phantom ship. It had almost again stand by with folded

Armed Forces Week to Start On Saturday

The twelfth annual Armed Forces Week will be observed for nine days beginning Saturday and continuing through Sunday, May 21, the Armed Forces Day Committee, 8 Church St., announced yesterday.

This year the Navy is "host service," with Vice-Adm. Charles Velborn Jr., commander of the 3d Naval District, designated as Area Four Armed Forces Day Commander of all activities in New York, New Jersey and the New England states.

In New York City there will be a 10,000-man parade on Fifth Ave. from 96th St. to 62d St. Saturday, May 20; an Army open house on Governor's Island and Saturday, May 13; a combined air-sea-land show at Foney Island Sunday, May 21.

At 2 p. m. and the opening of the public of military centers in the New York area, Saturday, May 20.

French Honor Gary Cooper

CANNES, France, May 6 (UPI)—France last night awarded the French Officer's Cross of the Order of Arts and Letters to cancer-stricken Gary Cooper for his "contribution to world movies for thirty-five years."

Mr. Cooper will be sixty tomorrow.

Pierre Cornet, president of the French National Film Institute, presented Mr. Cooper's medal to American movie-maker Fred Zinneman.

Mr. Zinneman said, "Thank you, I will see that this medal goes to Mr. Cooper."

Protest U. S. Poultry

BOON, May 6 (AP)—Protests have been made by West German farmers over imports of cheap poultry from the United States. They amounted to 20,000 tons in 1959 and 35,000 tons in 1960. This year, imports have continued to rise.

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